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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2146
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0943
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 001191

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/17/2022

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: KURDISH ACTIVIST ON CONTEMPORARY POLITICS,
CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE

REF: A. ANKARA 1179

[1](#)B. ANKARA 1139 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary and comment: A long-time Kurdish activist offered us a window into her tense, confused post-April 27 world. We have no way to judge the validity of her observations, but she conveyed a greater level of concern than usual. She described an unusually heavy military presence in Hakkari province, and a shift in the political equation spurred by the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party's (DTP) decision to run independent candidates. Support for the PKK and separatism remains strong, thanks to effective PKK propaganda and heavy-handed military tactics, and would strengthen further in the event of a cross-border operation (CBO), which she believes could be imminent, especially if the PKK breaks its self-imposed ceasefire. The situation in the Southeast is undoubtedly tense. The people there continue to face a next-to-impossible choice: the terrorist PKK and autocratic DTP, or Turkish state institutions which they view as draconian. End summary and comment.

[1](#)2. (C) A Kurdish civil rights lawyer recently expressed anxiety over the Turkish General Staff (TGS) e-memorandum of April 27, terming it different and harsher in nature than anything she had seen in years. It had a chilling effect on everyone and everything) instilling fear in some, conviction in others. And, as someone who came from an already heavily militarized region, she could not rule out further military action.

[1](#)3. (C) She described the "coup" atmosphere that she recalled as a child during the 1980 coup: her grandmother, who had lived under Mollah Barzani in northern Iraq, knew what it was to have to flee her home. While telling her and her siblings, "it appears the soldiers are angry," she quietly prepared clothes in case they needed to flee. At that time, no one dared talk about events) they did not even dare speak Kurdish among themselves. Now, she said, at least people are talking) for all the negatives that abound, this is a major, positive difference.

[1](#)4. (C) On the PKK, she was aware of DTP chairman Ahmet Turk's travel to northern Iraq to plead with PKK leaders to extend

their ceasefire. She feared, however, that the PKK would declare its ceasefire over on May 18. This would be bad for the region, bad for Turkey-Iraq relations, bad for everyone. She had heard that the PKK has threatened to kill candidates who run for any party but DTP in Van and Hakkari provinces.

¶5. (C) All parties had courted her to run for parliament from her native Hakkari province. DTP she characterized as far too radical: she agreed with them on some points but disagreed strongly on others; they would need MPs who would salute and do as they are told. They will have no flexibility. She is not, she emphasized, that sort of person) it is why she chose to be an attorney and operate independently. DTP's decision to run independent candidates had shifted the political landscape in the Southeast, making it impossible for people like her to run as independents, since they would automatically be associated with DTP. The Republican People's Party (CHP), with its move toward the nationalist right, had lost its voter base in the Southeast; she could not run for them. She had considered AKP as the best alternative) she had been close to accepting their offer, but was driven away in the end by AK heavy-handedness, in the person of AKP vice chair (and Kurd) Dengir Mir Firat, trying to tell her how to deal with issues.

¶6. (C) On the tenor of the current military presence in Hakkari, she described it as beyond what had been seen in recent years. In particular, the vehicle mix did not seem designed to fight local terrorists. Some appeared to be rocket launchers. She described as well a phone call received from the head of the village guards in Cukurca, on the Iraqi border. He told her they were essentially besieged, could hardly leave their homes and feared something

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would happen, should they try to visit northern Iraq. Others later confirmed the story to her.

¶7. (C) In Turkish society today, one of the greatest fears was from those who might bear a grudge if someone is seen as "anti-Turkish". This could have been the case with the murder of Turkish-Armenian Hrant Dink. When a British Lord brought our contact's case before parliament, demanding that she be protected, it had quickly appeared on the Internet and she began to receive threats. Similarly, a well-meaning article in The Economist intended to protect her had caused her a series of threatening phone calls and led her to spend a month out of the country.

¶8. (C) The current political situation was confusing) leftist intellectuals said they would vote for AKP, for example, but one couldn't rule out a more overt military intervention. People would stand up, though) they had no choice. The question was what the military and "deep state" would do. She described as fascist some of the language currently being used. And, while she distinguishes strongly between Turks and Kurds, in nearly the same breath said she very much wanted to make a difference) do something to help Turkey.

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WILSON